

STARS AND STRIPES

Friday, December 27, 2002

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

Sources: Some V Corps units get warning orders for Kuwait

BY JON R. ANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Some units of the Army's top combat command in Europe are preparing for deployment to the Middle East.

According to several sources speaking to Stars and Stripes on the condition of anonymity, V Corps units on Friday began receiving "warning orders" for deployment to Kuwait.

Formal deployment orders were expected to be forthcoming.

As of Friday evening, no deployment orders had come down.

Some 600 V Corps soldiers returned last week from exer-

"This is part of the continual flow of forces into the region. We're keeping the pressure on to support the diplomatic effort and to be ready should we go to war."

A Pentagon source

cises in Kuwait, but many of them soon will be on their way back to the desert. V Corps, based in Heidelberg, and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force are expected to form the two main ground combat commands under U.S. Central Command's Coalition Forces Land Component Command in Kuwait.

"The headquarters are now based there," said one senior military official at the Pentagon. "They just got a short respite for the holidays."

More than 100 V Corps soldiers remained behind in Kuwait after completing the Internal Look exercise last week.

The exercise tested a com-

mand's ability to control forward deployed troops.

The soldiers who remained were to maintain the corps' command post in a hot status.

Warning orders arrive to units before deployment orders and are used as a way to alert servicemembers of a possible deployment.

Sometimes units will be issued a warning order but never deploy. Deployment orders mean the unit is heading out.

Officials declined to provide specifics, but indicated any deployment would not be the massive mobilization of combat forces in Europe that is expected should the White House order an invasion of Iraq.

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Navy, Air Force also get orders

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has ordered the Navy to prepare two aircraft carriers and two amphibious assault vessels for possible action in Iraq, defense officials said Friday.

The orders, sent in the last two days, require the Navy to have the vessels ready to sail to the seas around Iraq within 96 hours after a certain date, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. They declined to specify that date.

The ships would bring a powerful military force to the region, adding several warships, scores of strike aircraft and roughly 2,500 Marines to the forces in the region.

If the order to sail is given, the USS George Washington battle group would be sent from the Atlantic fleets, officials

said. The George Washington returned from the region on Dec. 20 and is best prepared for action.

Either the USS Abraham Lincoln or the USS Kitty Hawk battle group would be sent from the Pacific fleets. The Abraham Lincoln is in Perth, Australia, having just left the Persian Gulf region. The Kitty Hawk is in port in Japan.

The defense officials declined to say which amphibious assault groups are most likely to be sent to conduct operations in Iraq.

Already in the region is the carrier USS Constellation and the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau, officials said.

In addition, the U.S. Navy hospital ship Comfort is expected to put to sea from its port in Baltimore next week and prepare for action, military officials said Friday. It will head to Diego Garcia, a British island in the Indian Ocean where the Unit-

ed States bases numerous military aircraft.

The 1,000-bed floating hospital will initially sail with a crew of 61 civilian mariners and 225 Navy personnel, including enough doctors to support two operating rooms, said Marge Holtz, spokeswoman for the Navy's Military Sealift Command.

Hundreds more will be flown to the ship as needed, she said.

The white-painted vessel, marked with red crosses, is equipped to handle combat casualties, including those injured in chemical or biological weapons attacks, Holtz said.

The Air Force also has received warning orders.

Lt. Wes Ticer, Air Force Air Combat Command spokesman, confirmed that orders have been given to units at the following Air Force bases: Seymour Johnson, Langley, Ellsworth, Moody and Nellis.

Warning

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"We're not there yet," said one military official familiar with the pending deployment orders, explaining that while several V Corps commands are being instructed to prepare for movement, that most would remain in Germany — for now.

In fact, the deployment orders are not expected to involve either of V Corps' two divisions, but instead center on positioning key elements of the corps' separate brigades.

Although at press time it was unclear which of those units — or parts of those units — would get the nod, V Corps' separate brigades include attack and support helicopter units, military intelligence, medical, military police, long-range artillery and logistics commands.

"This is part of the continual flow of forces into the region," said the Pentagon source. "We're keeping the pressure on to support the diplomatic effort and to be ready should we go to war."

Lt. Gen. William Wallace's V Corps oversee the majority of some 62,000 troops in Europe, including the 1st Infantry and 1st Armored divisions. During the Persian Gulf War in 1991, some 75,000 soldiers from Europe helped liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's forces.

Twelve years later, Iraq is under pressure to comply with a disarmament program it agreed to as part of the cease-fire agreement ending the war. Iraqi officials announced Friday they would provide a list of scientists involved in the country's nuclear, biological and chemical warfare programs.

Stars and Stripes reporter Rick Scavetta and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

E-mail Jon R. Anderson at:
andersonj@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Tricare tries to calm fears

BY KENDRA HELMER

Stars and Stripes

Tricare officials say beneficiaries in Europe needn't worry about the safety of their records after the state-side theft of 550,000 people's enrollment and claim files.

The company wants to reassure beneficiaries in Europe that their records are safe, and if they have questions about that theft, they can contact the company, said Troy Kitch, Tricare Europe spokesman.

The Dec. 14 break-in affects beneficiaries across the 16-state Central Region of the military's managed-care network, officials announced Monday.

Stolen were every computer hard drive containing names, addresses, phone numbers, Social Security numbers, claims data and other information on every servicemember, family mem-

ber and retiree enrolled in Tricare through TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp.

TriWest contracts with the military health system to provide health services to servicemembers, their families and retirees in the Central Region, which comprises Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and western Texas.

The break-in occurred at an industrial park office in Phoenix.

In Europe, Tricare beneficiaries' files are stored in secure servers at about 10 locations on military installations, Kitch said.

More than one agency checks the security of the systems to ensure that information remains secure, he said.

Kitch said he didn't think Tricare Europe received any calls from concerned benefi-

ciaries, although people in Europe who had lived in the Central Region may be affected.

Concerned beneficiaries have inundated TriWest with phone calls, said Jim Kassebaum, spokesman for TriWest.

He said TriWest is sending information to all affected beneficiaries within the next week to explain the situation.

The stolen files date to October 1999.

"At this point, we don't know why they were stealing the equipment," Kassebaum said.

The FBI, Defense Criminal Investigative Service and other law enforcement agencies are investigating the incident and assessing its impact.

Department of Defense officials have ordered all contractors working with the Tricare system to assess their physical and electronic security.

E-mail Kendra Helmer at:
helmerk@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Two more airmen convicted for drug use

BY RICK EMERT

Stars and Stripes

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — Two more 48th Security Forces Squadron airmen were convicted for drug use or distribution after a six-month investigation of 27 48th Fighter Wing airmen suspected of using or selling marijuana, Ecstasy, hashish or cocaine.

Senior Airman Marks Horton and Airman 1st Class Thomas Kleitz both pleaded guilty to three specifications of wrongful use of a controlled substance, according to a 48th Fighter Wing news release.

Horton was sentenced to two months' confinement, reduction to airman basic and a bad-conduct discharge for using and possessing marijuana, hashish and Ecstasy.

Kleitz was sentenced to 3½ months confinement, reduction to airman basic and a bad-conduct discharge for using, possessing and distributing Ecstasy.

Both will serve their confinement at the RAF Lakenheath confinement facility, according to the release. Kleitz and Horton are the third and fourth airmen convicted since a six-month investigation by the Office of Special Investigation ended, said Master Sgt. Will Ackerman, a 48th Fighter Wing spokesman.

All four airmen court-martialed thus far have pleaded guilty to the charges.

The investigation is ongoing, and no other airmen have been charged or court-martialed, Ackerman said.

"Whether more will be charged or courts-martialed depends on the evidence," Ackerman said.

Base spokesmen were just as tight-lipped after the first two courts-martial cases in early December and declined to speculate on possible future cases.

Some of the airmen may never be charged, and others may be punished nonjudicially, Ackerman said, adding that drug use does not necessarily mean an automatic discharge.

"Nothing is automatic," he said. A commander will decide the punishment in nonjudicial cases and the courts will determine it after a courts-martial, Ackerman said.

E-mail Rick Emert at:
emertr@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Steel from WTC slated for warship

BY JOEL STASHENKO

The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — Steel salvaged from the wreckage of the World Trade Center will be used to build the Navy's USS New York, a warship named in honor of those who perished in New York on Sept. 11, 2001.

The scrap steel was to be extricated from the Fresh Kills landfill on Staten Island on Friday and trucked south to a Northrop Grumman shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss. Northrop Grumman will start building the USS New York in Pascagoula in the middle of next year.

The USS New York will be the fifth of 12 amphibious assault ships in the San Antonio class, which the Navy calls one of its most technologically innovative. The 684-foot vessel will carry a Navy crew of 402 and up to 800 Marines.

The \$800 million vessel should be ready for active duty in 2007.

If the Twin Towers scrap meets specifications, it will be melted down and used to configure the edge of the bow that cuts through the water, said Northrop Grumman spokesman Jim McIngdale.

"We're very proud that the twisted steel from the WTC towers will soon be used to forge an even stronger national defense," New

York Gov. George Pataki said. "The USS New York will soon be defending freedom and combating terrorism around the globe, while also ensuring that the world never forgets the evil attacks of Sept. 11 and the courage and strength New Yorkers showed in response to terror."

New York state officials needed to get special authorization from Navy Secretary Gordon England to name the surface vessel the USS New York. Currently, only submarines are given state names.

Pataki wanted the USS New York to participate in the fight against terrorism.

It was the Navy's idea to incorporate scrap from the Trade Center in the new vessel, aides to Pataki said.

The structural steel primarily comes in a beam about 20 feet long and weighing between 20 and 30 tons that was identified by New York City officials in the Staten Island landfill, where the trade center wreckage was dumped. It is believed to have been part of the south tower, the second of the twin skyscrapers to be hit by jetliners, but the first to collapse.

Nearly 3,000 people died in the attack on the World Trade Center.

Most of the structural steel reclaimed from the Trade Center site already has been sold for scrap.

Soldier identified

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Military officials have identified the 25-year-old soldier who apparently took his own life three days before Christmas as Spc. Loren M. Martin.

Martin, a medical evacuation crewman from Duluth, Minn., was assigned to the 159th Medical Evacuation Company — a V Corps unit — at Wiesbaden Army Airfield in Germany.

German medical officials said two suicide notes were found on Martin, who suffered a gunshot wound to the head. A memorial service was held Thursday.

Award winner

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — U.S. Air Forces in Europe officials recently announced the 2002 Richard S. Schubert award winner.

The 39th Wing Judge Advocate office, Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, was honored for its legal services to the U.S. community there, as was Dr. Richard Schubert, who worked for 40 years as a civilian attorney in the office of the staff judge advocate.

The award is presented annually to the USAFE legal office that made the most significant contributions to improving host nation-U.S. relations.

U.S. Naval Hospital simplifies birth registration

Stars and Stripes

CAMP LESTER, Okinawa — They can't take away the pain of childbirth, but U.S. Naval Hospital officials here are making birth registration less laborious.

Initiatives implemented over the past few months are changing how new parents report the birth of children overseas.

"Birth Registration by the Bedside" aims to cut the hassle, letting new parents complete all necessary required State Department documents to attain birth certificates and passports. A similar program, called a Birth Abroad Brief, also helps parents gather copies of the paperwork essential for birth registration. That

brief is conducted the first and third Wednesdays of every month or by appointment.

The initiative speeds up the birth registration process. But the State Department requires a series of certificates and official documents to ensure babies are documented properly as U.S. citizens and given passports. Without those passports, babies born on Okinawa can't leave Japan.

Japanese and Tagalog translators are available.

Travel considerations are a particular concern given deployments and growing discussion of a possible war in Iraq. Missing documents, such as marriage certificates or divorce decrees, delay the return of a baby's birth registration and passport.

Preparing families can be particularly challenging if a spouse already is deployed, said Navy Seaman Rebecca Jones, a corpsmen assigned to the birth registration office.

"Deployed servicemembers might want to consider a power of attorney for their spouse to complete the paperwork without them," Jones said. "But that can't be a general power of attorney. It has to be a special power of attorney."

There are different things to consider for civilians assigned to Okinawa, people who have had divorces and servicemembers married to local nationals. All cases aren't the same.

Anyone with questions, or wanting documents reviewed, should call 643-7516.

Troops play Santa

American troops from Eagle Base in Bosnia and Herzegovina delivered five tons of gifts and supplies to children at "Vojo Peric" orphanage in the nearby city of Tuzla on Friday.

The donations came from families, friends, local radio stations and Americans from home. Troops will return to the orphanage to hand out individual gifts to children on Tuesday.

The mayor of Tuzla, Jasmin Imamovic, who happened to visit the orphanage at the same time, thanked the troops.

From staff reports

Officials: Iraqis improved their bioarms arsenal

BY MATT KELLEY
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Biological weapons are among the few capabilities Iraq has improved since being defeated by a U.S.-led coalition in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, government officials say.

Working under the noses of U.N. inspectors from 1991 to 1998, President Saddam Hussein's government probably developed mobile germ warfare labs and processes to create dried bacteria for deadlier and longer-lasting weapons, U.S. officials and former weapons inspectors say.

Although U.S. troops are being vaccinated against anthrax and smallpox and have protective gear, a biological attack cannot be detected until after exposure.

"The most frightening thing is Iraq's biological program," said David Kay, a former chief

weapons inspector for the United Nations. "Even in my inspection days, it was the program we knew the least about."

What inspectors eventually learned was disturbing. After the 1995 defection of Saddam's son-in-law, who ran the germ weapons program, Iraq acknowledged brewing thousands of gallons of deadly germs and toxins and loading some of them in bombs, missile warheads and rockets.

The weapons included anthrax, the germ that killed seven people in last year's U.S. mail attacks; botulinum toxin, nature's most deadly poison; and *Clostridium perfringens*, a flesh-eating bacterium that causes gas gangrene.

In late 1998, frustrated by Iraq's refusal to cooperate, the inspectors withdrew shortly before the United States and Britain began Operation Desert Fox, a bombing cam-

paign to compel compliance by Iraq. Saddam refused to let the inspectors return.

Iraq claimed it destroyed all its biological weapons, but U.N. inspectors concluded in 1999 that probably was a lie.

"Before the inspectors were forced to leave Iraq, they concluded that Iraq could have produced 26,000 liters of anthrax. That is three times the amount Iraq had declared," Secretary of State Colin Powell said recently. "Yet the Iraqi declaration is silent on this stockpile, which alone would be enough to kill several million people."

Iraq's development of anthrax-drying technology makes that arsenal even more dangerous than it was during the Gulf War. Its earlier biological weapons efforts relied on a liquid slurry of anthrax, which let the spores clump together and made it difficult to get the fine aerosol needed to

get the germs into people's lungs.

U.N. inspectors in the late 1990s found Iraq had drying machines that could be used to make a powdered form of anthrax.

Evidence also suggested that Iraq was experimenting with drying anthrax in combination with bentonite, a compound that would help the anthrax particles stay aloft. Iraq also has imported hundreds of tons of fumed silicon dioxide, another substance that would give anthrax an aerosol quality.

Although U.S. troops are inoculated against anthrax, a high enough concentration of anthrax spores still could make them sick, said Jonathan Tucker, a former inspector.

"If you're exposed to a massive dose, it could overwhelm a vaccination," said Tucker, a senior fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

U.S., Turkey discuss aid in event of Iraq war

BY SELCAN HACAOLU
The Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Two top U.S. officials met with Turkish treasury and finance officials on Friday to discuss measures to buffer the Turkish economy if there is war in neighboring Iraq.

Turkey's support is crucial to any U.S. military operation against Iraq but Turkey fears that a war could further hit its already ailing economy. Washington is reportedly looking to use Turkish bases, ports and railroads and deploy up to 80,000 troops in southeastern Turkey.

The visit by John Taylor, the U.S. Treasury Department's undersecretary for in-

ternational affairs, and U.S. Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman, coincided with a Turkish National Security Council meeting in the capital, where the country's military and civilian leaders discussed what role Turkey might play in a possible war against Saddam Hussein.

Turkey fears that a war could devastate its economy, bring tens of thousands of refugees to its border, and could make it a target for chemical, biological or nuclear attacks by Saddam. But it does not want to alienate its most powerful ally, Washington.

Turkey on Friday decided to increase the production of gas masks and train the public on how to act during a possible at-

tack with weapons of mass destruction, the semiofficial Anatolia news agency reported. No other details were available.

Prime Minister Abdullah Gul said he would discuss ways to achieve a "peaceful solution of the problem" with leaders of Muslim countries in the region.

The country's top brass and senior Cabinet members gathered Friday in a National Security Council meeting. After the meeting, the leaders did not say if they had made any concrete decision about Turkey's role in a possible war against Iraq. However, they acknowledged in a written statement that they had discussed Washington's "expectations from Turkey in a possible U.S. military operation against Iraq."

U.S. troops find rocket-launch site in eastern Afghanistan

The Associated Press

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — U.S. soldiers detained nine men after locating a site apparently used for rocket attacks on American bases in eastern Afghanistan, the U.S. command at Bagram air base said Friday.

Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division made the discovery while on patrol near

Khost, a city near the Pakistan border, the military said in a statement.

The statement did not say when the arrests took place.

Rockets — usually crude, Chinese-made weapons — have been fired at a several small U.S. bases in the area, usually without doing much damage.

"The patrol pursued and de-

tained four individuals, two of whom were armed," the statement said. "In a follow-up search operation, five more suspects were detained, and weapons and munitions were confiscated."

Forces loyal to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network and the ousted Taliban regime are believed to be operating in Afghanistan's mountainous east-

ern region and in the border areas with Pakistan.

During a similar patrol last week, attackers shot to death U.S. paratrooper Sgt. Steven Checo. They later fired rockets at Shkhin, a small town in Paktika province.

Bagram air base is the headquarters for about 8,000 American troops deployed across the mountainous nation, mostly along the eastern border.

Groups claims to have cloned human

BY MALCOLM RITTER

The Associated Press

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. — A member of a sect that believes life on Earth was created by extraterrestrials claimed Friday to have produced the world's first human clone, a baby girl.

The 7-pound baby was born Thursday by Caesarean section and will be home in three days, said Brigitte Boisselier, a former chemistry teacher and CEO of a company that did the experiment. She wouldn't say where the baby was born; she did say the birth was at 11:55 a.m. local time.

Other scientists expressed doubt that her group could clone a human.

Boisselier said the baby, dubbed "Eve" by the scientists, is a clone of a 31-year-old American woman. The woman donated the DNA for the cloning process, had the resulting embryo implanted and then gestated the baby, Boisselier said. If confirmed, that would make the child an exact genetic duplicate of her mother.

Boisselier, who wouldn't reveal any names, said the mother had resorted to cloning because her husband was infertile.

"The baby is very healthy," she said. "The parents are happy. I hope that you remember them when you talk about this baby — not like a monster,

like some results of something that is disgusting."

Boisselier did not immediately present DNA evidence showing a genetic match between mother and daughter, leaving her claim unsupported.

Michael Guillen, a former science editor at ABC-TV, told reporters at the news conference he was lining up "independent world-class experts" to perform DNA tests on the mother and baby. He said he was not being paid by Clonaid.

Boisselier said results would come within nine days.

Boisselier said she expects four more babies — from North America, Europe and two from Asia — to be born in

a few weeks. Two of the couples are using preserved cells taken from their own children before their deaths, and one is a lesbian couple, she said.

The couples were not asked to pay for the procedures but some had invested in Clonaid, she said.

Legislation or guidelines to ban human cloning are pending in dozens of nations, including the United States. Several countries, including Britain, Israel, Japan and Germany, already have banned it. There is no specific law against it in the United States, but the Food and Drug Administration contends it must approve any human experiments in the country.

Hanks tops film survey

Merry Christmas, **Tom Hanks**. You're our favorite.

The "Road to Perdition" and "Catch Me If You Can" star has shoved aside **Julia Roberts** as the nation's most loved movie star, according to poll results released Monday.

Roberts slipped from No. 1 to No. 3, behind **Mel Gibson**, according to Harris Interactive, which polls Americans on their favorite movie stars each year.

Roberts' biggest 2002 role was in the **Steven Soderbergh** flop "Full Frontal," which may account for her drop in the poll of 2,221 adults.

Harrison Ford held the fourth position, while his Indiana Jones dad, **Sean Connery**, was No. 5.

The rest of the top 10 included the late **John Wayne**, **Denzel Washington**, **Clint Eastwood**, **Tom Cruise** and **Sandra Bullock**.

Robin Williams is the sole star to drop off the list from last year, perhaps due to his recent penchant for portraying sociopaths.

'Sex' star boots hubby

Does this mean no more "Sex" for **Kim Cattrall**'s soon-to-be ex? Just a year after she and her husband released a how-to sex manual, the seductive actress has given her husband the boot, E!Online reports.

The "Sex and the City" star reportedly kicked her husband of four years, **Mark Levinson**, out of their New York home because he was too obsessed with, you guessed it, sex.

Faces 'n' places

Calls to Cattrall's publicist were not returned.

Cattrall, 46, who has complained that people confuse her with her character, **Samantha Jones**, and **Levinson**, 56, a professional jazz musician, met in 1998 and were married nine months later.

This was the third marriage for Cattrall.

Eve tells of blackmailer

Actress and rapper **Eve** is speaking out about her secret blackmail torment.

The 23-year-old star says an unknown man is trying to sell what he describes as a pornographic photo of her.

The man, who recently approached The New York Daily News with the picture, claims it shows Eve, before she became a hip-hop star, cavorting with two other women and a sex toy.

"I used to strip, so it could be me," she said. "Or it could not be me."

"This guy, whoever he is, has tried to blackmail us with this photo," she added. "He's called all these radio stations telling them about the photo. I mean, he's the type of guy who wakes up every morning to do this."

Eve says she's not worried about it.

Mama's a fashion icon

Selma Blair says her mother, a **Detroit** magistrate, is her fashion icon.

"I am so taken with my mother," the 30-year-old actress says in the January issue of *W* magazine. "She has the most amazing style, and I wear everything of

hers. And the one thing she always taught me was not to wear trends."

Blair, whose movies include "Cruel Intentions," "Legally Blonde" and the upcoming "A Guy Thing," favors cashmere sweaters, vintage bags and pearls.

"And I've never been to a fashion show, even though I'm always invited," she says. "Alas. If anyone knows me for my face, thank God. But I'd rather get a damned acting job than be a front-row girl!"

Spreading holiday cheer

New York's mayor peddled some holiday cheer Christmas Day, sending a teenager pedaling down the street on what has become known as the "strike bike."

Michael Bloomberg bought the \$500 bike earlier this month when he feared negotiators would fail to reach a new contract with bus and subway workers, plunging the city into holiday traffic madness.

Negotiators reached a deal Dec. 15, leaving the mayor with a choice: He could keep the strike bike for a few years until the next transit negotiations or give it away.

Caught in the holiday spirit, the mayor chose the latter, finding a 16-year-old bike enthusiast in the **Brooklyn** neighborhood of **Canarsie** whose holidays seemed gloomy until the mayor tabloids call "Bloomy" arrived at his doorstep.

"I was jokingly calling it the strike bike," Bloomberg said after rolling the bike into **Michael Pruitt's** living room. "This is a better bike for you than for me."

From news services

Mavericks 83, Hornets 81

NEW ORLEANS — The NBA-leading Dallas Mavericks are cutting it a lot closer than they would like.

Held well below their season average for the fourth straight game, the Mavericks held off New Orleans 83-81 on Thursday night behind Dirk Nowitzki's 23-point performance.

"Whatever their record is, it's no fluke," said David Wesley, who led the Hornets with 24 points.

"They've got guys out there that can get it done."

Dallas improved to 24-4 despite shooting 37.8 percent from the field. The Mavericks entered the game with a league-high 103.5 scoring average, but have averaged only 84 points in their last four games. They still managed to win three of them.

"If we rebound we've got to have five guys running. We can't just have some guys giving 60 percent," Nowitzki said. "We're not running hard enough ... I think teams have outworked us."

Nowitzki hit a turnaround jumper to give Dallas an 80-79 lead with about three minutes left, and the Mavericks held on from there, helped by the Hornets' late problems.

NBA

The Hornets, who committed an uncharacteristically high 18 turnovers, gave the ball away twice in the final three minutes.

Then Wesley missed a pair of long jump shots that would have given New Orleans the lead.

"We were lucky. We got away with one," Nowitzki said. "They had chances. They just missed their shots."

Steve Nash added 15 points for Dallas despite shooting only 4-for-16. He was 7-for-8 from the foul line. Nick Van Exel scored 13 points, Michael Finley 12 and Shawn Bradley added 10.

Hornets coach Paul Silas said he wanted to slow the pace.

"Our game plan was not to get into an up-and-down game with them," Silas said. "Rather than penetrate on the break, we opted to pull it out. They couldn't stop us in the half-court."

Baron Davis and P.J. Brown had 11 points apiece for New Orleans. Davis had 10 assists, and Magloire added 10 points and 15 rebounds.

New Orleans shot 39 percent in los-

ing for only the second time in 13 home games.

Wesley, who hit his first four three-pointers, couldn't explain the last two open ones he missed.

"I'm not going to get much sleep over those two. When they left my hand you couldn't tell me they weren't good," Wesley said.

"They probably felt better than any shot I shot all night."

SuperSonics 97, Raptors 88

SEATTLE — Gary Payton scored 35 points — including 10 in row to help Seattle take a comfortable lead — and the SuperSonics snapped an excruciating four-game losing streak with a victory over reeling Toronto.

After Toronto went on a 14-2 run to cut Seattle's lead to 63-62 with 1:55 remaining in the third quarter, Payton took over and scored the final eight points of the period and the first basket of the fourth.

The Raptors, still playing without injured Vince Carter and Antonio Davis, were led by Voshon Lenard with 27 points and Morris Peterson with 22. Toronto has lost four in a row and eight of its last nine games.

Rashard Lewis chipped in with 20 points for Seattle, which lost those four games by a combined seven points, the final three defeats were on game-winning shots in the final two seconds.

Pistons 87, Wizards 82

WASHINGTON — Richard Hamilton scored 22 points in his return to Washington, and Detroit turned up the defense in the second half to beat Washington.

The Pistons ended a two-game skid by rallying from an eight-point half-time deficit, holding the Wizards to just 33 points over the final 24 minutes.

Hamilton starred in Washington for two years before being sent to Detroit in the trade that brought Jerry Stackhouse to the Wizards.

Stackhouse led the Wizards with 24 points, and Michael Jordan added 17 on 7-for-17 shooting.

From The Associated Press

Stakes are high for both Eagles, Giants

All the elements will be there when the Philadelphia Eagles visit the Meadowlands on Saturday to play the New York Giants: a nasty rivalry, a lot at stake and, most likely, football weather.

"This is the kind of game you live to play," the Giants' Tiki Barber said.

At stake for the Eagles is home-field advantage throughout the playoffs: a victory and they clinch it. At stake for the Giants is a playoff berth.

New Orleans' shocking loss in Cincinnati last week lifted New York into the NFC's second wild-card spot. So all the Giants have to do is win to ensure a playoff berth.

The Eagles won the first game 17-3 on Oct. 28 and are favored by 1½ points. But New York's offense has new life since coach Jim Fassel started calling the plays after the loss in Philadelphia.

After averaging a little more than 12 points a game with offensive coordinator Sean Payton making the calls, the Giants are averaging more than 27 with Fassel running the offense, and they've scored 81 in their last two games, including 44 in Indianapolis last Sunday.

This week, however, they face the Philadelphia defense, one of the NFL's best. The Eagles, on the other hand, have A.J. Feeley at quarterback, a more station-

NFL picks

ary target for Michael Strahan, who traditionally has had his way with Jon Runyan, the Eagles' right tackle.

The Eagles have won six straight; the Giants three straight. But the Giants seem on one of those Fassel-inspired rolls they got on late in 1997 and again in 2000.

Home field and hunger.

GIANTS, 24-20.

■ Kansas City (plus 7) at Oakland (Saturday): The Chiefs are barely alive.

The Raiders can clinch home field in the AFC with a victory. ... **RAIDERS, 31-22.**

■ Miami (pick 'em) at New England: The Dolphins are 2-5 on the road and traditionally lose in December.

The Patriots have lost two straight unimpressively. Ricky Williams. ... **DOLPHINS, 16-12.**

■ Green Bay (plus 1) at New York Jets: If the Eagles lose, the Packers can get NFC home field, so a lot depends on what happens Saturday in the same stadium. ... **PACKERS, 24-16.**

■ Carolina (plus 7½) at New Orleans: After three straight losses, the Saints need help to get in.

New Orleans already has lost to two last-place teams: Detroit and Cincinnati.

These guys are better. ... **PANTHERS, 27-23.**

■ Atlanta (minus 2½) at Cleveland: The Falcons win

and they're in. The Browns win and they need help. ... **FALCONS, 30-24.**

■ Jacksonville (off) at Indianapolis: The Colts are another win-and-in team. ... **COLTS, 44-27.**

■ Tampa Bay (off) at Chicago: Can the Bucs finally win in cold weather? ... **BUCS, 8-3.**

■ Dallas (plus 6½) over Washington: Dallas' 10-game winning streak over the Redskins ends. So does Dave Campo's tenure as the Cowboys' coach. ... **REDSKINS, 17-6.**

■ Tennessee (minus 8) at Houston: The old Oilers go back to Texas. ... **TITANS, 31-13.**

■ Seattle (plus 3) at San Diego: Holmgren's job is safe. ... **SEAHAWKS, 24-19.**

■ Baltimore (plus 7½) at Pittsburgh: It's unlikely, but the Steelers might still get the first round off. ... **STEELERS, 17-13.**

■ San Francisco (off) at St. Louis (Monday night) The 49ers may play this one like an exhibition.

They still win. ... **49ERS, 26-20.**

■ Arizona (plus 11) at Denver: The Broncos aren't in very good shape. ... **BRONCOS, 34-14.**

■ Cincinnati (plus 7) at Buffalo: The Bungles blow the first pick in the draft. ... **BENGALS, 14-13.**

■ Minnesota (minus 3½) at Detroit: Surging for next season. ...

VIKINGS 31-26.

Last week: 8-8 (spread), 7-9 (straight up).

Season: 118-117-5 (spread), 149-90-1 (straight up).

From The Associated Press

CYCLING

AUSTIN, Texas — Lance Armstrong was named The Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year after winning his fourth straight Tour de France.

Armstrong was diagnosed in 1996 with advanced testicular cancer that had spread to his lungs and brain, and required chemotherapy and brain surgery. Doctors gave him a 50-50 chance of survival. By beating the disease, Armstrong gained the courage and will to conquer the Tour de France, considered one of the most grueling events in all sports.

Armstrong and Barry Bonds were the top two vote-getters for a second straight year, only this time the San Francisco Giants' star finished second. Armstrong received 45 first-place votes and 292 points from sports writers and broadcasters. Bonds had 31 first-place votes and 233 points. Tiger Woods, who won the award 1999 and 2000, finished third for the second year in a row.

TENNIS

Serena Williams won three of the four Grand Slam titles in 2002 and an astonishing 56 of 61 matches overall (a .918 winning percentage), she claimed a WTA Tour-leading eight titles (out of

only 13 tournaments played), and took home a record \$3.6 million.

She was a runner-up twice and never fared worse than the quarterfinals.

On Friday, Williams was honored as The Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year in a vote that was about as close as many of her matches.

She received 53 first-place votes and 351 points from writers and broadcasters across the country. Golfer Annika Sorenstam was next, with 27 first-place votes and 193 points, followed by Olympic champion figure skater Sarah Hughes (12 first-place votes, 158 points).

BASKETBALL

ATLANTA — Coach Lon Kruger was fired by the slumping Hawks, the second Atlanta coach to be fired.

Kruger said he knew he might be fired because of the Hawks' 11-16 record so far this season.

The news came hours after the Thrashers, a team also owned by AOL Time-Warner, fired coach Curt Fraser.

Hawks assistant coach Terry Stotts was to be named interim coach. Assistant Gar Heard was also fired.

Sports in brief

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Sacramento Kings guard Bobby Jackson will be sidelined for about six weeks with a broken left hand.

Jackson injured himself Wednesday against the Los Angeles Lakers when Shaquille O'Neal knocked the ball out of his hands while he was driving to the basket. Jackson, who wore a splint after the game, scored 11 points in the team's win over the Lakers.

HOCKEY

ATLANTA — Curt Fraser was fired as coach of the Atlanta Thrashers, who have the worst record in the NHL. He has been the only coach in the team's 3½-year history.

Atlanta is 8-20-1-4 this season, and Fraser leaves with a record of 64-173-31-15.

General manager Don Waddell will be the interim head coach when the Thrashers play at Carolina on Friday. Waddell's only previous coaching experience was in the minor leagues a decade ago, when he was coach and GM in San Diego.

Hours later the Hawks, a team also owned by AOL Time-Warner, fired coach Lon Kruger.

FOOTBALL

NEW ORLEANS — Moving quickly to reward its championship coach, Georgia gave Mark Richt a new \$1.5 million-a-year contract that will keep him with the Bulldogs through at least 2010.

The eight-year deal was announced before the third-ranked Bulldogs arrived in New Orleans for their Jan. 1 Sugar Bowl game against Florida State.

Georgia's long-term commitment should scuttle speculation about Richt being lured to another school after leading the Bulldogs (12-1) to their first Southeastern Conference title in two decades.

BASEBALL

ARLINGTON, Texas — The Texas Rangers took another step toward shoring up their bullpen by signing right-hander Esteban Yan to a one-year deal.

Yan, 27, went 7-8 with a 4.30 ERA and 19 saves in 55 games last season with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

His signing comes four days after the Rangers signed two-time All-Star closer Ugueth Urbina to a one-year deal for \$4 million with another \$500,000 deferred.

From The Associated Press

McNabb's status for postseason still uncertain

PHILADELPHIA — Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb is running and throwing again, but his status for the playoffs remains uncertain.

McNabb has been out since breaking his right ankle Nov. 17. The two-time NFC East champion Eagles (12-3) have won all five of their games without McNabb, including the last four behind third-string quarterback A.J. Feeley.

"There's no guarantee that he'll be ready at all and we understand that," Eagles coach Andy Reid said Thursday. "He's pushing himself and he's determined that he'll be ready to go, so we'll just see how it all works out."

McNabb had hoped to return for Saturday's regular-season finale against the New York Giants. The Eagles already have clinched a first-round bye, so McNabb will have two more weeks to be ready.

"It's a matter of being able to play and function and keeping yourself out of further injury obviously," Reid said. "It's a little different when you're playing 60-70 plays a game and when you're throwing it around out here [in practice]. He understands that. He understands what he's going through. He's pushing himself like crazy and that's what he needs to do right now." McNabb, a two-time Pro Bowl selection and runner-up for NFL MVP in 2000, completed 211 of 361 passes (58 percent) for 2,289 yards, 17 touchdowns and six interceptions in 10 games. He also ran for 460 yards and six TDs.

B. Johnson improves, but likely won't play

TAMPA, Fla. — Tampa Bay quarterback Brad Johnson said Thursday his sore back is improving, but it's unlikely he'll play Sunday night when the Buccaneers close the regular season against the Chicago Bears.

Johnson missed last Monday night's 17-7 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers because of a severe lower back bruise suffered during the fourth quarter of the Bucs' three-point victory over the Detroit Lions two weeks ago.

NFL briefs

If he is unable to play against the Bears, Rob Johnson will make his second start of the season.

"The injury happened right before the game-winning field goal in Detroit. I scrambled up in the pocket and I was actually trying to go down where I wouldn't get hit and keep the clock going and make them burn a timeout," Johnson said, speaking publicly about the injury for the first time. "One of the players landed on me with a knee and I knew immediately that I was hurt right then."

Johnson, who finished the Detroit game, has been receiving daily treatment and done some light jogging and throwing this week. He took snaps in practice Wednesday and Thursday with the scout team.

Meanwhile, defensive tackle Warren Sapp did not practice for the second straight day and is questionable for Sunday night with a left knee sprain. "But knowing Warren, he'll find a way to play," Gruden said.

Cardinals give RB Shipp 4-year extension

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Cardinals are not saying who their starting running back will be heading into next season. The evidence clearly points to Marcel Shipp over Thomas Jones.

In an unusual move for the notoriously conservative Cardinals organization, Shipp signed a four-year contract extension on Thursday. The deal is worth about \$8 million, but the size of the signing bonus — the only part of the contract that is guaranteed — was not known.

It was one of the few times the franchise has signed a player to an extension who was about to become a restricted free agent and simply could have received a tender offer. The only other one in recent memory was Jake Plummer's extension signed during the 1998 season.

The signing leaves open the question of what the Cardinals will do with Jones, the No. 7 overall pick in the 1999 draft. Jones is back in his Virginia home after breaking his right hand Thanksgiving weekend. He told the Cardinals he broke it hitting a counter while reaching for a ringing telephone.

The team put him on the non-football injury list, and chose not to pay him for the final five games — about \$135,000.

Shipp has rushed for 776 yards in 171 carries and has caught 37 passes for 407 yards, including an 80-yard screen pass for a touchdown against St. Louis — the Cardinals' longest scoring pass play since 1988.

Virus keeps TE Shockey out of practice

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Pro Bowl tight end Jeremy Shockey missed the New York Giants' practice Thursday with what coach Jim Fassel hopes is a 24-hour virus.

"He was throwing up all morning," Fassel said. "I think he was sick last night. We gave him some fluids and sent him home for two reasons. It does no good having him here, and I don't want him around other guys giving them what he's got."

The first-round draft pick from Miami leads all NFL tight ends with 64 catches for 796 yards. He had seven receptions for a career-high 116 yards in a 44-27 win over Indianapolis on Sunday.

Spurrier promotes Jackson

ASHBURN, Va. — The more Steve Spurrier learns, the more things change around the Washington Redskins.

The first-year NFL coach said Thursday he has promoted running backs coach Hue Jackson to offensive coordinator, effective in January.

Spurrier said he will still continue to be the primary play-caller and also continue to develop the team's passing game.

From The Associated Press

Canucks 4, Oilers 2

EDMONTON, Alberta — There are three big reasons why the Vancouver Canucks are one of the top teams in the NHL: Todd Bertuzzi, Brendan Morrison and Markus Naslund.

The linemates combined for five points Thursday night in Vancouver's 4-2 victory over the Edmonton Oilers.

"They've been real poised and patient with the puck," coach Marc Crawford said. "They're playing with a lot of confidence right now."

The Canucks have beaten the Oilers three times in less than two weeks. Naslund scored four goals and the line earned nine points in Vancouver's 6-3 victory in Edmonton on Dec. 14. He scored the overtime winner in a 4-3 home victory over the Oilers on Dec. 21.

"They all complement each other very well," Edmonton center Todd Marchant said. "Bertuzzi's big and strong, Naslund's a good setup player and they're all capable of scoring."

Mike York and Jason Chimera scored for the Oilers, who have lost a season-high five straight, two in overtime.

Morrison opened the scoring midway through the first, completing a tic-tac-toe passing play for his 12th goal of the season.

Bertuzzi found Morrison in the slot and the center slid a backhand shot between the legs of goalie Tommy Salo.

"When you've got a goal scorer on your line like Naslund, you just try to suck in as many guys as you can," Bertuzzi said, "and you find the openings for him."

After York tied it with his 12th at 7:45 of the second, Bertuzzi put the Canucks up with a power-play goal with 53 seconds left in the period. It was his 17th of the season, eighth with the man advantage.

The Oilers nearly tied it five minutes into the third when Anson Carter's shot bounced off the end boards, off Ed Jovanovski and into the net. But a

NHL

video review showed the net was off its moorings and the goal was disallowed.

"What can go wrong is going wrong for us right now," Edmonton coach Craig MacTavish said. "But we played a part in the outcome of this game in the way that we started it."

Marek Malik added a short-handed goal in the third, and Mats Lindgren scored into an empty net for the Canucks, 5-2-1 in their last eight games.

Senators 3, Sabres 2

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Daniel Alfredsson scored the tiebreaking goal in the second period and added two assists to lift Ottawa over Buffalo.

Magnus Arvedson and Todd White also scored for the Senators, 8-1-1 in their past 10 games. Ottawa won its second straight in Buffalo after going nearly four years without a victory there.

Alfredsson put Ottawa up 3-2 at 3:16 of the second period when he redirected Arvedson's pass. Martin Prusek, in just his sixth start of the season, made 20 saves to improve to 6-0.

Henrik Tallinder and J.P. Dumont scored for the Sabres, who lost their fourth straight despite taking a 2-0 lead.

Red Wings 4, Blue Jackets 2

DETROIT — Tomas Holmstrom scored two goals in Detroit's victory over Columbus.

The defending Stanley Cup champions have lost just once in the past 12 games (8-1-3) and are unbeaten in their past six (4-0-2).

The Red Wings beat the Blue Jackets 1-0 in Columbus on Monday night.

Mike Sillinger scored both goals for

the Blue Jackets, who lost their third in a row.

It was Holmstrom's first two-goal game since March 2001. Jason Woolley and Brett Hull also scored for Detroit.

Predators 3, Stars 1

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Scott Walker had two assists, and Nashville had goals from three players.

Kimmo Timonen, Scott Hartnell and David Legwand all scored against Dallas' Marty Turco.

Pierre Turgeon scored for Dallas, who had Mike Modano back in the lineup following a three-game absence because of a concussion.

The Predators held the Stars to only four second-period shots.

Nashville then came out strong in the third period, getting a pair of goals in a span of 30 seconds.

Wild 2, Blackhawks 2

CHICAGO — Theo Fleury stuffed in a rebound of Alex Zhamnov's shot from the slot after Dwayne Roloson made a pad save at 3:06 of the first period.

Sergei Berezin also scored for the Blackhawks, who extended their unbeaten streak for four games (3-0-1) and are 6-1-2 in their past nine.

Wes Walz and Stephane Veilleux had goals for the Wild, whose winless streak reached four games (0-3-1).

Blues 3, Avalanche 2

ST. LOUIS — Pavol Demitra had two goals and an assist and Scott Mellanby scored the go-ahead goal when the puck popped up in the air and dropped over Patrick Roy's outstretched glove.

New Avalanche coach Tony Granato lost for the first time in four games. Colorado, which got a goal and an assist

from Milan Hejduk, had outscored the opposition 11-6 Granato's first three games — victories over the Oilers, Wild and Canucks.

Mellanby, who had 15 goals last season, got his 13th at 12:17 of the second period to put the Blues ahead 2-1. His rebound shot appeared to hit the stick of a defenseman in front of the net and the puck popped straight in the air and landed near the goal line before trickling across.

Sharks 4, Mighty Ducks 1

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Owen Nolan scored two goals in less than nine minutes in the second period and Teemu Selanne scored for the sixth straight game.

Matt Cullen scored for Anaheim, which had won six of its previous seven games. The Ducks have lost four of their past five road games.

Marco Sturm also scored for San Jose and Patrick Marleau added two assists.

Nolan ended a six-game goal drought when he beat Anaheim goalkeeper Jean-Sebastien Giguere to the stick side with 17:44 left in the second period.

Kings 4, Coyotes 3 (OT)

LOS ANGELES — Brad Chartrand scored at 3:14 of overtime and rookie Michael Cammalleri had a goal and an assist for Los Angeles.

Bryan Smolinski got his seventh goal before leaving early in the second period with an eye injury. Mathieu Schneider scored on a power play, and Ziggy Palffy and Lubomir Visnovsky each had two assists.

Rookie Branko Radivojevic scored with 6:01 left in regulation for the Coyotes, who rallied to tie it three times. Mike Johnson and Daniel Briere also scored for Phoenix, 0-18-3 when allowing more than two goals.

From The Associated Press

NBA

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Jersey	20	9	.690	—
Boston	18	10	.643	1½
Philadelphia	18	10	.643	1½
Orlando	16	14	.533	4½
Washington	12	16	.429	7½
New York	8	16	.333	9½
Miami	9	19	.321	10½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Indiana	20	8	.714	—
Detroit	19	9	.679	1
New Orleans	18	12	.600	3
Milwaukee	12	15	.444	7½
Atlanta	11	16	.407	8½
Chicago	10	18	.357	10
Toronto	8	20	.286	12
Cleveland	6	24	.200	15

Western Conference

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	24	4	.857	—
San Antonio	18	10	.643	6
Houston	15	12	.556	8½
Utah	15	12	.556	8½
Minnesota	15	13	.536	9
Memphis	8	21	.276	16½
Denver	6	22	.214	18

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Sacramento	23	8	.742	—
Phoenix	17	11	.607	4½
Portland	15	11	.577	5½
Seattle	15	15	.500	7½
L.A. Clippers	12	16	.429	9½
L.A. Lakers	11	19	.367	11½
Golden State	9	18	.333	12

Thursday's games

Detroit 87, Washington 82
Dallas 83, New Orleans 81
Seattle 97, Toronto 88

Friday's games

Indiana at Cleveland
San Antonio at Atlanta
Orlando at Memphis
Boston at Miami
Milwaukee at New Jersey
New York at Houston
Minnesota at Chicago
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix
Utah at Portland
Toronto at Golden State

Saturday's games

Atlanta at Washington
Boston at Orlando
New Orleans at Indiana
Minnesota at Detroit
San Antonio at Chicago
New Jersey at Milwaukee
New York at Dallas

Scores/standings

Philadelphia at Utah
L.A. Lakers at Denver
Portland at Sacramento
Golden State at L.A. Clippers

Sunday's games

Phoenix at Cleveland
New Orleans at Houston
Toronto at L.A. Lakers

NHL

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	18	9	2	3	41	80	69
Philadelphia	16	8	8	1	41	79	70
Pittsburgh	14	14	3	4	35	102	105
N.Y. Rangers	13	19	5	1	32	92	123
N.Y. Islanders	13	16	5	0	31	92	105

Northeast Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Ottawa	21	8	5	0	47	109	75
Boston	20	9	4	1	45	112	86
Toronto	17	14	4	0	38	100	84
Montreal	16	13	4	2	38	99	107
Buffalo	8	20	5	1	22	73	97

Southeast Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	15	12	5	3	38	81	85
Tampa Bay	15	12	5	3	38	100	96
Washington	16	16	3	0	35	94	100
Florida	10	10	9	5	34	84	101
Atlanta	8	20	1	4	21	82	124

Western Conference

Central Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Detroit	20	8	6	1	47	107	83
St. Louis	18	10	5	2	43	113	89
Chicago	17	13	5	0	39	81	79
Columbus	12	17	3	2	29	96	102
Nashville	9	16	6	4	28	71	93

Northwest Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	21	10	5	0	47	111	89
Minnesota	18	11	7	1	44	96	85
Edmonton	16	12	4	3	39	94	89
Colorado	13	9	9	4	39	95	89
Calgary	10	17	5	3	28	70	98

Pacific Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	18	10	8	1	45	109	96
Los Angeles	16	12	4	3	39	96	92
Anaheim	15	11	6	3	39	91	85
San Jose	14	15	3	3	34	98	108
Phoenix	11	16	6	3	31	90	113

Two points for a win, one point for a tie and overtime loss.

Thursday's games

Ottawa 3, Buffalo 2
Pittsburgh 6, N.Y. Rangers 1
Detroit 4, Columbus 2

St. Louis 3, Colorado 2
Nashville 3, Dallas 1
Minnesota 2, Chicago 2, tie
Vancouver 4, Edmonton 2
San Jose 4, Anaheim 1
Los Angeles 4, Phoenix 3, OT

Friday's games

Montreal at Ottawa
Atlanta at Carolina
New Jersey at Washington
Dallas at Florida
Boston at Tampa Bay
Philadelphia at Colorado
Toronto at Calgary

Saturday's games

Minnesota at Buffalo
Boston at Atlanta
St. Louis at Columbus
Montreal at N.Y. Islanders
Carolina at N.Y. Islanders
N.Y. Rangers at Florida
Detroit at Nashville
Washington at New Jersey
Philadelphia at Phoenix
Toronto at Edmonton
Anaheim at Vancouver
Chicago at San Jose

Sunday's games

Los Angeles at Colorado
N.Y. Rangers at Tampa Bay
Columbus at St. Louis
Anaheim at Calgary
Detroit at Dallas

NFL standings

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Miami	9	6	0	.600	354	274
New England	8	7	0	.533	354	322
N.Y. Jets	8	7	0	.533	317	319
Buffalo	7	8	0	.467	352	388

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Tennessee	10	5	0	.667	354	321
Indianapolis	9	6	0	.600	329	300
Jacksonville	6	9	0	.400	315	295
Houston	4	11	0	.267	210	343

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Pittsburgh	9	5	1	.633	356	314
Cleveland	8	7	0	.533	320	304
Baltimore	7	8	0	.467	285	320
Cincinnati	2	13	0	.133	270	429

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Oakland	10	5	0	.667	426	304
Denver	8	7	0	.533	355	337
Kansas City	8	7	0	.533	467	375
San Diego	8	7	0	.533	305	336

National Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Philadelphia	12	3	0	.800	408	231
N.Y. Giants	9	6	0	.600	310	272
Washington	6	9	0	.400	287	351
Dallas	5	10	0	.333	203	309

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Tampa Bay	11	4	0	.733	331	196
Atlanta	9	5	1	.633	386	290
New Orleans	9	6	0	.600	426	378
Carolina	6	9	0	.400	248	296

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Green Bay	12	3	0	.800	381	286
Minnesota	5	10	0	.333	352	406
Chicago	4	11	0	.267	281	364
Detroit	3	12	0	.200	270	413

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-San Francisco	10	5	0	.667	347	320
Seattle	6	9	0	.400	324	341
St. Louis	6	9	0	.400	285	349
Arizona	5	10	0	.333	255	380

x-clinched division

Saturday's games

Minnesota 20, Miami 17
San Francisco 17, Arizona 14
Philadelphia 27, Dallas 3

Sunday's games

Atlanta 36, Detroit 15
Green Bay 10, Buffalo 0
Washington 26, Houston 10
Carolina 24, Chicago 14
N.Y. Giants 44, Indianapolis 27
Tennessee 28, Jacksonville 10
Kansas City 24, San Diego 22
Cincinnati 20, New Orleans 13
Seattle 30, St. Louis 10
Oakland 28, Denver 16
Cleveland 14, Baltimore 13
N.Y. Jets 30, New England 17

Monday's game

Pittsburgh 17, Tampa Bay 7

Saturday, Dec. 28

Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants
Kansas City at Oakland

Sunday, Dec. 29

Minnesota at Detroit
Dallas at Washington
Tennessee at Houston
Miami at New England
Baltimore at Pittsburgh
Cincinnati at Buffalo
Atlanta at Cleveland
Carolina at New Orleans
Jacksonville at Indianapolis
Green Bay at N.Y. Jets
Seattle at San Diego
Arizona at Denver
Tampa Bay at Chicago

Monday, Dec. 30

San Francisco at St. Louis

From The Associated Press

Boston College 51,
Toledo 25

DETROIT — Brian St. Pierre will go down as one of the best quarterbacks in Boston College history.

He proved why Thursday in the Motor City Bowl.

The senior, third on the school's career passing yards list behind Doug Flutie and Glenn Foley, threw for a career-best 342 yards and three touchdowns in the Eagles' 51-25 victory over Toledo.

"When the rest of the team is playing as well as our guys did today, playing quarterback is easy," said St. Pierre, who completed 25 of 35 passes and was selected the game's most valuable player.

"People forget that we were second in the Big East in passing, and that was behind Miami, which speaks for itself. I don't know what Toledo thinks, but I don't think they've played any team as good as us all year."

Boston College (9-4) appeared in a bowl game for a fourth consecutive season, winning the past three. The Eagles, 32-17 over that span, finished the season with four straight victories.

Toledo (9-5) wasn't able to take advantage of a partisan crowd at Ford Field, located about an hour north of the Rockets' campus.

The bowl's previous five games were played at the Silverdome in suburban Pontiac.

Boston College faced the challenge of the Rockets' unpredictable spread offense, but it was the Eagles who dom-

inated with a more traditional approach.

Boston College scored touchdowns on its first six possessions.

"Our number one objective was to stop the run, but they were able to hit us with some big passing plays," Toledo cornerback Brandon Hefflin said. "I don't think we played poorly. They just made plays."

One of the biggest was St. Pierre's 40-yard touchdown pass to Grant Adams with 5:21 remaining in the first half to make it 35-10.

Boston College became the ninth team in school history to win at least nine games and the first since 1993.

The Eagles set a Motor City Bowl record for most points. The previous record was set in Marshall's 48-29 victory over Louisville in 1998. It was the most points the Eagles scored since a 55-3 victory over Connecticut on Oct. 7, 2000.

"They just out-executed us. The quarterback was really sharp, and their receivers did a nice job of getting open and catching the ball," Amstutz said. "We didn't make a big play to stop one of their drives."

Boston College set a school bowl record for points in a half, surpassing the 31 points the Eagles scored in the first half of the 1985 Cotton Bowl, a 45-28 victory over Houston. They also set a Motor City Bowl record for points in a half.

Toledo, coming off a 49-45 loss to

Motor City and Insight Bowls

Marshall in the MAC championship game, failed to defend its Motor City Bowl title. MAC teams had won the previous four Motor City Bowl games.

Pittsburgh 38,
Oregon State 13

PHOENIX — On a chilly night in a baseball park, the Pittsburgh Panthers became the bullies of the Big East.

The 24th-ranked Panthers dominated the trenches and held Steven Jackson to a season-low 34 yards on 19 carries in a 38-13 victory over Oregon State on Thursday night in the Insight Bowl.

Pitt's victory at Bank One Ballpark came a few hours after Boston College's 51-25 rout of Toledo in the Motor City Bowl, making the Big East 2-0 in bowl competition.

"I think people cannot ever refer to it as the Big Easy anymore," Pittsburgh coach Walt Harris said.

Pitt — a team that nearly beat No. 1 Miami — pulled away from a 10-10 half-time tie by pushing the Beavers around on offense and defense in the second half.

"We showed that we were the better conditioned team," Panthers defensive end Claude Harriott said.

Pittsburgh won nine games in a season for the first time in 20 years.

"It's a good feeling," said Panthers quarterback Rod Rutherford, who passed for a touchdown and ran for an-

other. "In the beginning of the season, I had a lot of doubters. I was just going out, not trying to be macho about it, that I can do whatever I want if I want to do it."

Brandon Miree rushed for 113 yards, including a 7-yard touchdown run, and was selected the game's MVP.

"We knew they were a tough defense, No. 10 in the nation coming in," Miree said. "But we felt we were a physical football team."

"We've been physical with all the teams that we played this year. I think we opened some eyes around the country."

Jackson, who had gained fewer than 100 yards in just three games all season, broke loose only once, a 60-yard gain that was called back by a holding penalty.

"They played very physical against us," Oregon State coach Erickson said. "It did surprise me, because I thought we could run the football against most people, and we couldn't tonight."

Shawn Robinson became the first Pitt player to return a punt for a touchdown in the school's 22 bowl appearances.

The Panthers (9-4) broke a 10-10 tie with a pair of TDs in the third quarter. Tez Morris' interception set up the go-ahead touchdown on Rutherford's 1-yard run, then Robinson broke a pair of tackles en route to his 66-yard punt return to make it 24-10 with 3:26 to go in the third quarter.

"That was the turning point," Harris said, "that and the field goal at the end of the half."

From The Associated Press